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1. Purpose and Scope. This chapter describes program policy for customer service. The DEEOIC customer service policy affirms the DEEOIC commitment to serving its customers with excellence. It is consistent with long-term goals stated in or by the DEEOIC operational plan. It reiterates DEEOIC's responsibility to work with its customers to improve the practical value of the information, services, products, and distribution mechanisms it provides. This policy serves as a reminder to all DEEOIC employees of the importance of interacting proactively with customers, identifying their needs, and integrating these needs into DEEOIC program planning and implementation.

2. DEEOIC Standards for Customer Service. The highest level of customer service is expected in all dealings with individuals conducting business with the DEEOIC. As representatives of the DEEOIC, all staff members are expected to be courteous, professional, flexible, honest and helpful. Operational plan standards have been implemented to measure the performance, responsiveness and timeliness of the program.

3. DEEOIC Customer Service Goals.

- a. DEEOIC customers are satisfied with our services.
- b. DEEOIC services are delivered to customers in a timely and accurate manner.
- c. Customer needs are integrated into program planning and product development.

4. Telephone skills. Effective telephone skills are one of the keys to providing accurate, courteous, and timely information to callers. DEEOIC staff talk to claimants, nurses, doctors, health care providers, employer organizations, governmental organizations, and others on a daily basis. The goal should be to handle DEEOIC inquiries in a professional and pleasant (non-defensive) manner:

- a. Answer the telephone when it rings. All DEEOIC personnel are expected to answer the telephone and provide prompt, informative responses;
- b. Identify the caller's needs and answer questions accurately;
- c. Keep conversations brief but provide accurate, courteous, and timely information;

#### 4. Telephone Skills (Continued)

- d. Encourage individuals to wait for DEEOIC's written or oral response before calling again;
- e. Give callers an accurate estimate of when a return call will be attempted, if necessary.
- f. Often claimants will request clarification of issues through the Resource Centers. It is imperative that answers to questions regarding DOL procedures and case specific issues are handled by the DO. The Resource Centers must forward all such calls to the DO for response. The CE or other individual answering these calls must provide an immediate response to any calls forwarded. For additional instructions regarding the role of the Resource Centers, review the Resource Center Manual.

5. Writing skills. DEEOIC staff members must use appropriate writing skills in all correspondence. Written communication must be clear, concise and instructional. Moreover, the CE is to refrain from any confrontational language within the body of any written communication. Specific skills that a CE should use include:

- a. Use reader-oriented writing. Write for the customers, not for other government employees. Avoid using acronyms within the body of written correspondence. Review correspondence before issuance to eliminate grammatical, spelling or other technical errors;
- b. Use natural and non-adversarial expressions. To the extent possible, write conversationally. Write with commonly used words;
- c. Make documents visually appealing. Present text in a way that highlights the main points to be communicated. Use items such as bullets or numerical lists when providing instructions or identifying deficiencies. Avoid lengthy narrative explanations.
- d. Tailor the letter to the specific situation or issue. Do not use lengthy, "laundry list," boilerplate letters when only certain information is being requested or provided.